

Alternatives Selection Process

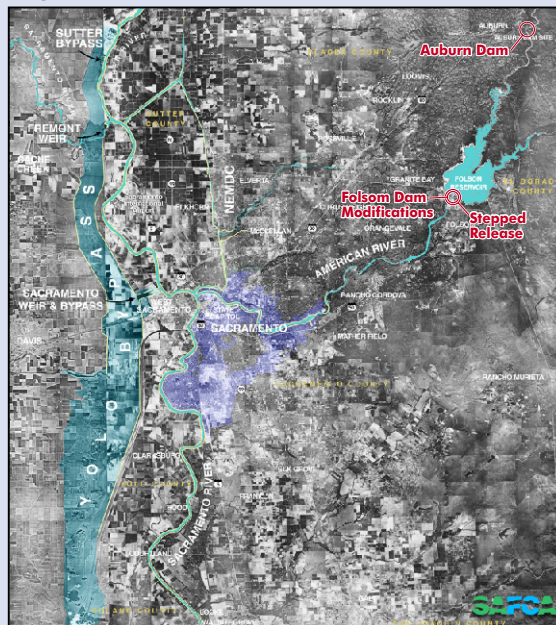
The current study was mandated by Congress as a focused extension of the ongoing American River Watershed Investigation. The purposes of the study are to:

- examine the feasibility of raising Folsom Dam to create additional flood storage capacity, an alternative not pursued in either of the preceding studies;
- re-examine previously studied alternatives (such as increasing the design capacity of the levee system and creating more flood storage space within Folsom Reservoir) in light of the expected accomplishment of the improvements that Congress has already approved; and
- present new information on opportunities for environmental restoration along the lower American River.

The scoping process provides the public the opportunity to suggest new, reasonable alternatives. However, the study will not focus on the flood control dam at Auburn because this option was sufficiently analyzed in the previous studies and Congress has not asked for further examination of it.

Both the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) require a comparative analysis of the environmental impacts of proposed projects and alternatives. This analysis will be included in the current study along with information on the costs and benefits, reliability, effectiveness, and acceptability of each alternative. It is anticipated that this information will be presented in draft form to local and state decision-makers in the summer of 2001 so that they may identify a locally preferred plan. This plan will then be the focus of a final report with recommendations to Congress in the spring of 2002.

Regional Flood Control Features



Alternatives

The proposed study will consider the following alternatives:

No-Action. Only improvements previously authorized by Congress would be implemented, including:

- Folsom Dam outlet modifications,
- anticipatory releases,
- Natomas levee work, and
- lower American River levee work.

These improvements are considered "existing", even though construction will not be completed until 2006. This alternative assumes that Congress would authorize no additional flood control improvements along the American River.

Folsom Dam Raise Plan. Folsom Dam would be raised to provide increased reservoir storage space for flood control. Different dam raise alternatives (raises of up to 12 feet) will be included in the evaluation of the Folsom Dam Raise Plan.

Stepped Release Plan. The capacity of the American River channel below Folsom Dam would be increased to accommodate higher flood control releases from the dam. Three increased channel capacity options will be presented:

- 160,000 cubic feet per second (cfs);
- 180,000 cfs; and
- 160,000 cfs, with early release through new outlets at Folsom Dam.

Additional Anticipatory Release Plan. Additional flood control capacity would be created at Folsom Dam by augmenting the updated Flood Management Plan. This alternative goes beyond the flood control elements presently authorized under the No-Action Alternative.

Combination Plan. Various combinations of the above alternatives will be created and assessed.

Other Alternatives. Other reasonable alternatives will also be considered.

Ecosystem Restoration. Opportunities for ecosystem restoration along the lower American River will be studied as a project purpose separate from flood control.